

H. J. J.

1492

A

# CANDID REVIEW

O F

The most important Occurrences that took place  
in IRELAND, during the last three Years :

IN WHICH IS COMPRISED,

- I. The Proceedings of the NATIONAL CONVENTION assembled in Dublin, November 1783, and the succeeding Year.
- II. Rise and Progress of the Bill for effectuating a Commercial Intercourse between the two Nations, on permanent and equitable Principles.
- III. His Grace of Portland's Reasons for opposing the Twenty Propositions sent from the Commons to the Lords of England, for their Consideration.
- IV. Proceedings of the Irish Legislature on the Twenty Propositions transmitted from England.
- V. Opinion of Mr. Fox's ministerial Character.
- VI. The probable Consequences of any Proposition in the British Parliament, tending to an UNION with the Sister Nation.
- VII. The present State of the Press in Ireland considered.

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq.

O F

GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON.

---

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY P. BYRNE, No. 108, GRAFTON-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.





---

T O

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq.

---

S I R,

I HAVE read your treatise with very great pleasure. Most of the historical anecdotes you have collated, respecting the original settlement of Ireland, are extremely interesting, and your observations on the melancholy neglect of that kingdom, during a long succession of British monarchs, must prove highly satisfactory to those, who may be induced hereafter, to contemplate the feeble policy of our ancestors.

The information given in the first volume, that you propose to extend this work, afforded me an additional satisfaction, and I am induced to press the completion of it with more than ordinary solicitude, because I have observed your remarks throughout have not the most distant reference to

A 2 party.—

party.—Having no connection with ministers or their opponents, but equally independent of both, you uninterruptedly pursue the great object of your attention—THE PROSPERITY OF IRELAND, AS A PROTESTANT STATE, UNDER THE IMMEDIATE DOMINION OF A BRITISH SOVEREIGN. Sentiments flowing from so pure a source, must be cordially and gratefully received by the natives of both countries; and to assist a work, that embraces such a resplendent virtue, is the chief object of this address.

The political occurrences of the last three years in Ireland, and the proceedings of the English legislature on every matter that related to the sister kingdom, must be considered objects of great magnitude, and of course demand your particular attention. I shall therefore endeavour to facilitate your proceedings by laying before you a laconic statement of the most important transactions of that period, and in the order they occurred on both sides the water.

In November 1783, the inhabitants of Dublin were so warmly engaged in *reforming* the popular branch of their legislature, that people of every description quitted their avocations, to assist a measure they conceived of so much consequence to their future prosperity. The loom, the anvil, the shop-board, and the stall, were deserted, to attend  
a very

a very numerous body of gentlemen assembled in the metropolis at that time, under the title of the NATIONAL CONVENTION, and for the avowed purpose of *renovating the constitution*. The powers assumed by this assembly on the commencement of their proceedings, went farther than an appeal to the constitutional representatives of the people; they declared, that a considerable majority of the inhabitants throughout the island, had withdrawn their confidence from Parliament, and had sent them into convention for the purpose of correcting the various evils that from time to time had crept into the political system, since the memorable period of its establishment. The people, *therefore*, having transferred the privileges of parliamentary delegation, and *vested them* with competent authority, they would proceed to establish the constitution on its original basis, and thereby *faithfully* discharge the *important trust* reposed in them, by the free suffrages of their countrymen.

This species of political jargon, you may suppose, was treated with proper contempt by every man of common understanding. The delegates however met in convention, and proceeded to state the grievances of the people. The venal boroughs were reprobated, as so many putrifying excrescences that had nearly contaminated the political constitution, and must prove fatal to the body politic,  
if



if not immediately amputated. Seats in Parliament, they declared were now bought and sold as openly as any species of merchandize, and would very probably, in a short time, be sent to market and disposed of by *vendue*. In short, the constitution was soon declared to be in such a putrescent state, that without a salient and salutary remedy was applied, the whole must dissolve; or what must be considered a greater evil, the constitutional powers of the democracy so immediately swallowed up in the vortex of prerogative, that Ireland might bid a long, a last adieu to LIBERTY.

These melancholy denunciations had the intended effect. All, *at that moment*, appeared in readiness to support the convention with their *lives* and *fortunes*. It was however thought expedient to proceed with moderation, as no doubt was entertained but the evils complained of would be redressed by the united wisdom of the delegates, without the people having recourse to open hostilities. The members therefore proceeded with great calmness, and with a very laughable solemnity, to *renovate the constitution*, and so purify the democracy, as to render it independent of the Crown. These very *important deliberations* were however soon interrupted by a claim made by the Catholics, and of such consequence as to require a separate discussion. The people of that communion,

munion declared themselves friends to a Parliamentary Reform, provided they were admitted to a full participation of the right vested by the constitution in their Protestant fellow subjects, of voting upon elections. They contended that such a privilege ought to be granted them, as they were taxed without being represented, and were shut out from all offices in the state, notwithstanding they had manifested an unshaken loyalty to the house of Brunswick, and a steady attachment to the political constitution of Ireland. This unprecedented demand was negatived by almost every Protestant gentleman in convention, as directly leading to the establishment of a Popish Parliament, and of course, entailing on their children all the miseries incident to despotic rule and Papal domination. The effects of this opposition were soon felt; no systematic proceedings were now carried on. Resolutions were indeed published, but they were treated in a series of letters, signed a Dungannon Delegate (written by Mr. Charles Sheridan, Secretary at War, one of the ablest officers under the Crown in Ireland) with so much severity, and at the same time in such a pleasing vein of satyrical reasoning, that people out of doors began to express their opinions, that all the *wisdom* of the convention could not *mend* the constitution. Some of their resolutions were incautiously obtruded on Parliament,

ment, but met with such a contemptuous reception, that an adjournment immediately took place, and all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of their mission totally defeated.

In the succeeding year another Convention was congregated in the metropolis, and for the avowed purpose of restoring the constitution to its pristine vigor. At this meeting, the elective franchise was again claimed by the Catholics, and rather in a higher tone of expostulation. Mr. Flood, who was present at the former Convention, attended this meeting, but finding nothing effectual could be done, unless a full participation of that sacred privilege was granted to the Catholics, very prudently quitted the assembly, and never afterwards returned to it. The loss of so great an advocate for a Parliamentary Reform was a misfortune not to be repaired ; the delegates however, soon after his departure, adjourned the assembly, and left the constitution, with all its infirmities, to be relieved by the hand of TIME.

These frivolous proceedings had scarcely faded on the minds of the people, when a very loud clamour was raised (not for the first time) throughout the kingdom, for protecting duties. Non importation agreements had been entered into, and a spirit of discontent appeared in most of the trading parts of the metropolis. Several of the principal manufacturers



facturers complained, that notwithstanding the concessions made by England in favour of Ireland since the year 1779 were numerous, and in time would be productive of good consequences to their country, yet still the trade between the two nations was not equal. Britain claimed a right of sending her manufactures to the Irish market, but shut her ports against the manufactures of the sister kingdom; and by the construction which she put upon her navigation laws, prohibited the Irish from importing into England the produce of her colonies, whilst she claimed a right to import into Ireland, the produce of every nation on the face of the globe. The Irish manufacturers therefore complained of this inequality of trade, as England could by her large capital, and extensive credit, undersell them, not only in foreign markets, but in their own, and of course render the free trade, and colony trade, adjusted in 1779, of very little consequence to Ireland. The remedy proposed was to lay duties, amounting to prohibition, on a variety of articles of British manufacture, and to continue these restrictions, until the general trade between the two nations was settled on terms of equality, and mutual benefit. The Irish legislature heard these complaints, but very wisely rejected a war of prohibitory duties, as a dangerous experiment.

ment. They knew very well, that if England retaliated, the trade of Ireland would be almost annihilated on the instant. Great Britain either by taking off the 30 per cent. imposed on foreign linens, imported into England, or by making the Irish linens an object of British revenue, could very nearly destroy the staple of their country, and indeed put the remaining branches of Irish manufacture into such circumscription that a general bankruptcy might be expected.

The debates in Parliament on this occasion were carried on with great warmth. They terminated however in an Address to the Throne, praying that the servants of the Crown might be directed to prepare, during the intervening recess, a plan of commercial intercourse between the two kingdoms, upon liberal and equitable principles. This motion *we are informed* gave rise to the bill of commercial adjustment, of which we have lately heard so much in both kingdoms, and was certainly attended with *one* good consequence—that of diverting the minds of the people of Ireland from a *parliamentary reform*, to matters infinitely more essential to the real interest of their country.

In the last session, the leading features of this important system were brought before the Irish Parliament in the shape of eleven propositions. Previ-

ous

ous however to this introduction, Mr. Foster, the present Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Beresford, first Commissioner of the Revenue, (two gentlemen perfectly competent to so important a negotiation) had an interview with the first Lord of the Treasury in London, and it was said, explained the extent and tendency of the Irish propositions so effectually to Mr. Pitt, that he *pledged himself* to carry them through the English Parliament without the *variation of a letter*.

When the propositions came before the Irish legislature, gentlemen in opposition on that side the water, expressed their disapprobation of the whole proceeding; they alleged that his grace of Rutland, and the King's servants in Ireland, had taken the nation by surprise; that instead of giving the representatives of the people time to deliberate on a matter of so much importance to the empire in general, and to consult with their constituents, particularly such as were acquainted with the commercial interests of the nation, all was kept a profound secret until the last moment. That as the relative situation of both countries ought to be perfectly understood by every gentleman who voted either for or against the propositions, full time ought to be given for the purpose of thoroughly



investigating so complex a business, and getting at every possible information.

The then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Foster, agreed with opposition, that gentlemen ought to have time to prepare themselves on so momentous a concern, and that in fact, every man in the kingdom would have full time to contemplate the intended adjustment, and to examine it minutely, before the royal assent could be given to a bill, founded on the propositions then before the house. He reminded gentlemen, that nothing was before them at that time but the *outlines* of the system. That if the propositions received their approbation, they must be sent over for the concurrence of the English legislature, and afterwards returned to them. This must be a work of considerable time, and give gentlemen a fair opportunity of procuring every information they could desire. The Chancellor also observed, that when the bill was before the house, they might debate it, clause by clause, so that no possible inconvenience could arise from their sending the propositions, as they then stood, for the consideration of the English Parliament. This reasoning, together with a few cautious observations made by Mr. Grattan, and some other popular gentlemen, who saw clearly the servants of the Crown had been very sedulously employed in

in making a good commercial bargain for their country, induced the Irish Commons to pass the propositions, as they then stood, which was accordingly done with only one dissenting voice.

The proposed arrangement, as it passed the Irish legislature, was, in the course of the last session, brought before the English Parliament, by the illustrious youth now at the head of the Treasury, and supported with his usual ability and eloquence. He was opposed by Lord North, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Sheridan, chiefly on the principle that a farther relaxation of the navigation laws in favour of Ireland, would effectually destroy the commerce of England, or in a very short time transfer the whole to the sister nation. The arguments of these gentlemen, in support of this opinion, had such weight, that all the manufacturers throughout the kingdom were alarmed. Time was therefore given for the purpose of obtaining further information. The Minister soon found he had gone too far in pledging government to an implicit adoption of the eleven propositions from Ireland, and was therefore reduced to a very awkward dilemma. His grace of Rutland was pledged in like manner to the Irish nation; they had given him, on the credit of his promise, one hundred and forty thousand pounds a year in new taxes; the

the unfulfilled honor of the house of Manners was their security. In this perplexed situation the Minister really stood for some time. He was opposed in the House of Commons by four of the ablest men that perhaps ever graced the records of the English Parliament: and without, by nine-tenths of the principal manufacturers and commercial people in the kingdom. A departure from the system he was pledged to support would, in all probability, be attended with such tumults in Ireland, that a change of ministers might ensue, and the ruin to this country, in case the navigation laws were again relaxed in favour of the sister kingdom, was now so apparent, that mischiefs of the most alarming tendency might be very naturally expected on this side. After a long examination of witnesses, and questions referred to the Committee of Privy Council, touching the proposed arrangement, it was at length found, that a departure from the original system was absolutely indispensable. But some ingenuity was necessary to accomplish this delicate innovation without appearing to mean it. Gentlemen in opposition proposed amendments. Some of their amendments were adopted, and *it is said* were afterwards reprobated by the proposers, as trenching on the legislative independency of the Irish Parliament. This conduct in opposition was deemed



deemed insidious by the Minister, and indeed I have very little doubt, but gentlemen in opposition, seeing the embarrassed situation of the Minister, did exercise every means in their power to encrease it. Such treatment every Minister may expect in this country. Gentlemen that have manifested the most unblemished integrity *in office*, frequently oppose government, *when out*, and for the sole purpose of vaulting again into the seat of power. It is said Mr. Fox stands foremost in this rank of character; but in my opinion he merits a much better treatment from his country. Ambition may indeed be the ruling passion of this great and extraordinary man, but a desire to accumulate wealth is a vice we all know he is a stranger to. I have such an unbounded confidence in the ministerial integrity of Mr. Fox, that were the keys of the Treasury in my disposal, and at a moment when it contained a treasure equal to a complete liquidation of the national incumbrances, I would freely commit them to his care, without a single condition, or stipulation. I would *defy* him to appropriate the smallest part of it to any purpose incompatible with an honourable discharge of his duty. I would *defy* him with security, for his nature would not suffer it.

The

The eleven propositions transmitted by the Irish legislature, were in the course of five months investigation on this side, increased to twenty. They passed the Commons notwithstanding the efforts of opposition, and were sent up to the Lords for their concurrence. In the course of their deliberations, a circumstance occurred that has given rise to so many contradictory opinions, on the other side the water, that I am tempted to treat the matter more in detail than I at first intended.

His grace of Portland, in the course of the debate, frankly declared, (in answer to an observation made by a noble peer now in office) that during his administration, he knew of no determination of the Cabinet to make any farther concessions to the sister kingdom ; that in fact, if any had been determined on, he would have immediately resigned, as he was convinced nothing farther could be granted to Ireland, without certain ruin to the commercial interests of Great Britain. This declaration, as it came from a nobleman who is known to possess, not only a most extensive knowledge in the local polity, and relative interests of both kingdoms, but those innate virtues of the heart that give a genuine lustre to nobility, drew the attention of several gentlemen, members of the Irish legislature, some of whom in debate on the

the twenty propositions transmitted by the British Minister, stated it, as embracing a sentiment hostile to Ireland. Now, Sir, that you may perfectly understand the extreme fallacy of this opinion, I will faithfully state the noble Duke's conduct when Chief Governor of Ireland, and at a moment when the favourite object of a free constitution was agitated in that kingdom, together with his reasons for opposing the twenty propositions; intended as the foundation of a commercial adjustment with the sister nation; and which have been misunderstood, I cannot say intentionally misrepresented, on the other side the Channel.

In the year 1782, when his Grace of Portland occupied the vice-regal chair in Ireland, the people were not satisfied with the simple repeal of the sixth of George I. but insisted on the Parliament of England solemnly renouncing all legislative authority over them in future, and that the right claimed by Ireland, to be bound in all cases whatever, only by laws made by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, should never more be questioned, or questionable. His Grace, on this occasion, never interposed, but left the matter entirely with the Irish Parliament. His declaration was, "state your demands. If I ap-  
" prove your address I will transmit it, if not; I



“ will resign.” Certainly nothing could be more honourable and decisive. An address was presented, demanding the independency of their legislature, the independency of their judges, the restoration of the judicature of their lords, and a variety of other matters equally important to the Irish nation. In a word, they demanded as free a constitution as the people of England enjoy: a requisition which his Grace of Portland so readily and so earnestly adopted, that he immediately transmitted the address, and with it a positive declaration, that unless it was complied with in every particular, he would immediately solicit the King’s leave to resign. The whole was granted, and from that moment, the kingdoms of England and Ireland, were as completely separated, as two kingdoms could be, governed by one common sovereign. Now, Sir, when the subject of an intended commercial arrangement between the kingdoms, founded on the twenty propositions, was agitated in the House of Lords, the Duke of Portland opposed it, and upon the following grounds. He said, that in the year 1779, the Irish demanded a free trade, which previous to the 15th of Charles II. they enjoyed, and which was put into circumscription by the British acts of navigation passed at that memorable period. This demand

demand was granted by the English legislature, and by that means the Irish recovered their right to trade with all nations, and to every part of the world, (the British plantations excepted) subject to such duties as their own Parliament might from time to time impose. This partial relaxation of the navigation laws, the Duke of Portland highly applauded, as a measure that would tempt the Irish to embark in commercial pursuits, and in time would be productive of infinite good consequences to the empire in general. The Irish, not satisfied with being shut out from the British plantation trade, demanded at the same æra, a farther relaxation of the navigation laws in their favour. They desired that a liberty of trading directly with the British plantations might be granted them, and the administration of that time also carried this point in favour of the sister kingdom; they were admitted to trade directly with the British plantations, in a variety of articles, particularly specified, without any reference to British duties, and in every other article subject to the rate of British duty. In the year 1782, another demand came from Ireland, and was likewise acceded to on the part of Britain, namely, a free constitution. The history of the world does not record such another harvest of commercial and constitutional benefits

as Ireland experienced in the course of three years. These concessions however were, in the opinion of his Grace of Portland, perfectly consistent with the dignity and political interests of Great Britain, and fairly due to the Irish, for their unshaken loyalty, and steady attachment to the English Government, through a long series of domestic embarrassments, and foreign warfare. The spirit of *demanding* however was not dead in Ireland. She still complained that by a partial and unfair construction of the navigation acts, she was deprived of the channel trade, and by the proposed adjustment, made it a condition that she should be at full liberty to import into England, colonial and foreign commodities, in like manner as Great Britain imports into Ireland, the produce of her plantations, and the produce and manufactures of foreign states. Here, said his Grace of Portland, I must stop. A monopoly in her home market, is the only pillar on which Great Britain rests ; it is the only support she now has in the hour of her adversity ; every thing else she hath liberally shared with the sister nation ; but in this, and only this, the interests of the two kingdoms are, and ought to be, for ever distinct. When Ireland claims a full participation of the navigation laws, and of course a liberty of supplying England with  
the



the produce of her own colonies, through her medium, she in effect demands all the trade, commerce, manufactures and wealth of Great Britain, Were the people of this country so utterly lost to all sense of their own interests, as to acquiesce in such a monstrous requisition, what commercial man, what artificer, or manufacturer, would remain on this side of St. George's channel, an hour longer than he could transport his family and capital to Ireland. There he could carry on his avocations, possessing at the same time, all the blessings of the English constitution, without labouring under the burthens and inconveniencies of its government. There he would enjoy as pure an atmosphere, and a more prolific soil than his own. He would soon experience the advantages of his insular situation; Ireland, advanced by the hand of nature into the Atlantic, invites the traffic of all the western world, and the Englishman, alert and conversant in matters of trade and navigation, would soon enrich himself, by underselling his countrymen in their own market.

At this hour what is it that enables Britain to support her fleets and armies; to pay the interest of her national debt, amounting in the gross to more money than the circulating coin of every nation on the face of the earth? What is it that enables her to support her colonies, and to keep her  
station

station in the rank of nations? What is it that enables HER TO PROTECT IRELAND AS A PROTESTANT STATE, and to secure to her the blessings of a free government? NOTHING BUT THIS SINGLE IMMUNITY, the exclusive power of supplying her *home market* with the produce of her *own colonies*, the only privilege in her power to give, not conceded to the sister nation. If Ireland complains, that without such a privilege being granted to her, there can be no commercial adjustment, on the principles of equality settled between the two nations, the answer ought to be open, manly, and decisive. *Let this only inequality of trade continue.* To acquiesce in the requisition, would be inevitable destruction to Britain; to reject it, cannot be fatal to the growing prosperity of Ireland. If the parliament of that kingdom lead on the natives to industry, satisfied with what they have obtained since the year 1779, they will be a happy and flourishing people. They can now trade with any nation that will trade with them. The navigation laws have been relaxed in every particular to promote the trade of Ireland, except in the single instance of the British market. She may trade to the British colonies, and not only supply herself, but every foreign nation with the produce. The legislative arm of Britain can no longer stretch itself across the channel and stop her progress. An emulative principle in her manufacturers, and an industrious at-  
tention

tention to commerce, will soon procure her capital, and make the island flourish. The Irish Parliament therefore ought to rest satisfied ; they have had every commercial advantage England can grant with safety to her people. Great Britain must retain the only means left of employing her industrious poor, preserving her seamen, and if possible, increasing her revenue, to answer the growing exigencies of the state.

Speaking therefore as an Englishman, said his Grace of Portland, I oppose this bill of commercial adjustment, because it must eventually wither every sinew of the British Government. As an Irishman, I oppose it, because if a Minister on this side the water could be so weak as to adopt a measure pregnant with such mischiefs, or so abandoned as to acquiesce in it, the people of England, when they began to contemplate their impending ruin, would unite, as one body, and throwing aside every obedience to the executive authority, would force Government to restore their trade, their commerce, and the vital principle of their inheritance. A gloom would shortly after spread itself throughout the sister nation, jealousies and discontents would ensue; the Irish would speak to their brethren on this side in terms of asperity and reproach. England would be considered as an envious and unsatiate monopolist, that would deprive  
the



the people of Ireland of their natural rights.—  
 Every possible means would be used to retaliate,  
 and which must at length terminate in the most  
 dreadful of all human calamities—A CIVIL WAR.  
 —What the issue might be it is impossible for hu-  
 man sagacity to determine; but it is *possible* that  
 Ireland might eventually be stript of her present  
 independency, and placed in a situation similar  
 to that in which she stood previous to the year  
 1779. As an Irishman therefore, said this wise  
 statesman, I oppose the measure, to avoid the pos-  
 sibility of consequences, so conclusively ruinous to  
 my country, which, as a Protestant State, entirely  
 depends on the protecting hand of England.

These, Sir, I understand were the leading sen-  
 timents of his Grace of Portland, on the impor-  
 tant negotiation respecting a final adjustment of  
 commercial intercourse with Ireland, and were (if  
 I am rightly informed) delivered in private to his  
 friends of the Lower House of Parliament. Upon  
 the whole, his Grace appeared a most sensible and  
 sincere friend to both countries, and merits the  
 hearty acknowledgments of every man who is de-  
 sirous of adjusting the trade of both nations, on  
 liberal and equitable principles.\*

The

\* The writer of this letter having stated the foregoing particu-  
 lars to a gentleman of the first talents and information, was assur-  
 ed,

The propositions, after receiving some amendments in the Upper House, were sent to the Commons, and shortly after were transmitted to his Grace of Rutland for the purpose of laying them before the Irish legislature. On the 12th of August 1785, this momentous business came before the Lower House of Parliament in Ireland. Mr. Orde, Secretary to the present Viceroy, moved for leave to bring in *a bill for effectuating the intercourse and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both kingdoms.*

I shall not attempt to lay before you a sketch of the oration delivered by the secretary previous to this motion, because it was really *incomprehensible.*

ed, that when the twenty propositions were under the consideration of the Upper House, his Grace of Portland did not so much as intimate his disapprobation of *any further concessions to Ireland*, or said one word that could, if construed with integrity, bear such an interpretation. His Grace indeed denied in the most explicit terms, that *any such measure* as was then under the consideration of their Lordships, had ever been proposed, or, he believed, thought of, during his administration. And asserted further, that if *such a system* had been intended, as it must go to a *mutual surrender of rights* which each kingdom should most inviolably maintain, he would rather solicit his Majesty's permission to retire from the public service, than consent to a measure so fundamentally injurious to *both nations*, and so destructive to the general interests of the empire.

D

Such

Such another *speech*, I will venture to assert, hath not been delivered in a public assembly since the *unfortunate* departure of *Orator Henley*. It was however taken in short hand by a member in the *Irish House of Commons*, (Sir Henry Cavendish) and printed for the *entertainment* of the public. This circumstance, however cruel as to the individual, may be productive of many good consequences. It may induce future Viceroys to be more attentive to the abilities of their substitutes in the Lower House of Parliament, and thereby secure the energy of government an effectual and constitutional direction. The official Minister in Ireland ought to possess a very comprehensive mind. He should be eloquent in debate, quick and unembarrassed in reply, fertile in expedients, elegant in his deportment, and what is if possible more essential, he should be perfectly acquainted with the general character and political dependencies of the natives, and their country. Such a man would govern the Irish nation, through the medium of their affections, and the voice of party would be only heard as the expiring echo of malevolence. At present, however, we see a man of great industry, and with many other qualities that render his character in private life truly amiable, placed as the substitute of vice-regal power in the democratic branch



branch of the Irish legislature, but so utterly destitute of every cardinal requisite, that his exertions serve only to excite risibility, and provoke contempt. This, Sir, is a painful and barren subject, I shall therefore dismiss it, and for the purpose of indulging in a garden of sweets, reared by the genius of that darling child of nature, the inimitable Grattan.\*

This gentleman opposed the motion; and in a speech that would have done honour to the most accomplished orator of the Augustan age, reprobated the whole, as a system calculated to subvert the rights of Ireland. He declared the Minister had acted a most equivocal and disengenuous part. The Irish nation had generously paid him in advance one hundred and forty thousand pounds a year in new taxes, satisfied with his assuring them, that every letter of the *eleven* propositions should be carried through the English Parliament; but after having got the taxes, he abandons the former system, and proposes one that went to an incipient and creeping union—a union *in limine*. By the English bill,

\* The two speeches of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan in our Parliament, the first delivered on the 12th of May last, and the second on the 30th of the same month, were both printed in Dublin previous to the twenty propositions being officially laid before the Irish legislature. And to these publications, Government in Ireland attribute the rejection of the proposed system.

said Mr. Grattan, we are to subscribe whatever laws the Parliament of Great Britain shall prescribe respecting your trade with the British Plantations ; your trade in the produce of foreign plantations, and part of your trade from the United States of North America. Over all these objects you have no propounding—no deliberative—no negative—no legislative power whatsoever. Here then, said he, is an end of your free trade and your free constitution. The fourth proposition, that chiefly went to effect this fatal purpose, was to him an insuperable obstacle against his entering into the merits of any part of the bill that respected a commercial bargain with England. As long as that proposition stood a part of the system, he would oppose the whole—not all the commerce of England should bribe him to surrender an atom of the constitution. It was gained by the unexampled spirit and perseverance of the people, and their delegates in Parliament could not barter it away. The free trade in 1779, was closed, and could not be opened : the colony trade, adjusted at the same period, was in *good faith* closed also. But the free constitution of 1782, belonged to the people of Ireland, and was out of the jurisdiction of Parliamentary delegation. The Sovereign, on that memorable transaction, made a noble experiment on  
the

the feelings of the nation ; he sent them a free constitution, unaccompanied with any stipulation, and it had its effect ; the people were with Government from that moment, until the present most unfortunate attempt on the rights of the nation. Without compensation, said Mr. Grattan, you obtained a free trade, a colony trade, the independency of your Judges, the government of your Army, the extension of the constitutional powers of the Council, the restoration of the judicature of your Lords, and independency of your Legislature. See what you now obtain by compensation ; you obtain a covenant not to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and the Straits of Magellan ; a covenant, not to take foreign Plantation produce, but as the parliament of Great Britain *shall permit* ; a covenant, not to take certain produce of the United States of North America, but as Great Britain *shall permit* ; a covenant, not to take British plantation produce, but as Great Britain *shall prescribe* ; and a covenant, never to guard the primum of your manufactures. If it be said, that by the English bill, we may at any time dissolve the settlement, by not passing such acts of the British parliament, respecting trade and navigation, as do not in our opinion confer the same benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms, I

answer,



answer, that nothing can be gathered from such an argument but this—*Lend us your constitution, say the people of England, and if you do not like the use we make of it, you may take it again.* This speculation of future liberty, as a consolation for present submission, is an insult to the people of Ireland, injurious to the political morality of the nation. To come at the British market, we must pass under the British yoke—terms dishonourable, derogatory, incapable of forming any fair and friendly settlement. Mr. Grattan, however, stated a variety of instances to shew, that under the proposed bill of commercial adjustment, the minister for the time being, might enforce conditions that would restrict and materially injure the trade of Ireland, without affecting the commerce of Great Britain; and in that case, the Irish Parliament would be no more than a register and stamp, to introduce the law and edict of another land, and to preside over the disgraceful ceremony of their own abdicated authority. He contended, with infinite ability, that by the fourth proposition, nothing less was intended by the British Minister, than a resumption of the power of external legislation. But as the constitution was finally closed in 1782, and could not be opened again, he declared such an act, even if assented to by the Irish Parliament, would be  
totally

totally void—it would be dead born from the womb.

Mr. Grattan, in the course of his speech, took a much more extensive view of the proposed adjustment than I have stated; but as the chief of his objections rested on the fourth proposition, which, in his opinion, went to a complete dereliction of Irish independency, I have touched upon that part alone.

Several gentlemen of great ability in the Irish Parliament, opposed the system, particularly Mr. Flood, who, with his usual perspicuity and eloquence, reprobated not only the bill then moved, but the whole of the original propositions, that were carried through the House with such unexampled precipitation. He said the only boon granted by the proposed arrangement, was the liberty of re-shipping colony produce. Until the 15th of Charles II. the Irish could export any thing to, and import any thing from the British colonies, as freely as England; and that after landing it in Ireland, they could re-ship it for any other country, and for England as well as any other. Therefore, said Mr. Flood, this liberty of re-shipping British colony produce, did, in every consideration of reason and *good faith*, accompany the settlement of 1780. The Irish

Irish were either restored to that liberty, or the whole of that transaction was a deception.

As to the fourth resolve, as it stood numbered in the twenty propositions, he contended that upon every constitutional principle, it was totally and positively inadmissible. The twentieth resolve of the British Parliament, struck also, in his opinion, at the vital principles of a free government. It went, in effect, to the establishment of a perpetual revenue bill in Ireland. The controul which the constitution had given the popular branch of the legislature over the annual mutiny bill—over the annual duties—over the collection of the revenue, and every other description of public expenditure, formed a strong bulwark against every encroachment of the executive power, and could not be diminished without impairing one of the most essential privileges belonging to the British government. To say the application of these supplies, were still under the proposed system, to remain with Parliament, did not in his opinion lessen the mischiefs; at all events, it was establishing a dangerous precedent, which eventually might overturn the liberties of the people, and for that reason, ought never to be agitated within the walls of an Irish House of Commons. If we look, said Mr. Flood, for an adequate compensation, for this sacrifice of constitution,



tution, we shall look in vain. But what is the compensation offered? a full participation of commercial benefits; in other words, a liberty to send Irish manufactures and the produce of foreign states, or of the English colonies, into Great Britain;—a liberty which is your right, and which England robbed you of, by her navigation laws, but which in good faith was restored to you, when the settlement of 1780 was adjusted. In this view of the matter, which considered perfectly correct, Ireland could not treat with Great Britain, the fundamental principle of the treaty was to all intents and purposes fallacious; namely, that Ireland had no just right or claim to a participation of commercial advantages, and must, therefore, *purchase* them from Great Britain. If Ireland acceded to this doctrine, compensation must be considered as a tribute, and an acknowledgment of her holding such a participation, as a *grant*, not as a *right*.

Mr. Flood gave a hearty negative to the propositions in *toto*. In matters of trade, he said, not the least appearance of an ingenuous reciprocity could be found. Respecting the constitution, a total dereliction of every principle appertaining to a free government was so apparent in the proposed system, that he could not avoid expressing his astonishment that a man could be found so entirely

destitute of honour as to defend it. Upon every point he was copious, brilliant, and argumentative.

The servants of the Crown defended the proposed arrangement with equal zeal, perspicuity, and judgment. The present Speaker, Mr. Foster, then Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Hutchinson, Secretary of State and Provost of Trinity College; Mr. Fitzgibbon, his Majesty's Attorney General; and Mr. Beresford, First Commissioner of the Revenue, were the principal supporters of the bill.

They declared that not a single inch of ground on which opposition stood was for a moment tenable. All their conclusions were drawn from arguments learned in the seminaries of Utopia, and could only make an impression on such minds as are tickled with elegant trifling and pompous declamation.

The principle and tendency of the bill, said these gentlemen, may be understood by the meanest capacity. Stript of all the embellishments of oratory, the plain state of the business will be found to stand thus. The people of England, willing to unite both kingdoms in bands of perpetual amity, invite the people of Ireland to a final adjustment of all commercial differences—You have expressed a desire, say the people of England, to  
enjoy

enjoy a full participation of our trade and navigation, on terms of equality. We have no objection to take you into partnership, and to give you free access to the home market of our country, provided you consent to adopt such laws as our Parliament shall from time to time enact for the regulation of commerce, such laws imposing the same restraints and conferring the same benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms—Remember, *Paddy*, says the Englishman, that such a requisition on my part, is but reasonable. The colonies *are ours*: we support them with our blood and treasure, and you are exempt from such inconveniences. All laws therefore for the regulation of commerce must, and ought to originate in our Parliament. Agree to this as a fundamental principle, and we will proceed further in the arrangement. I beg to be excused, *Mr. Bull*, replies the Irishman. I am told by some wise men in my Country, that such an act in me would destroy the free constitution you *restored to me* in the year 1782, and the free trade you *gave me back* in the year 1779.—Your wise men, *Paddy*, talk very foolishly, says the Englishman, but to obviate these supposed difficulties, I will consent that all laws passing in England, for the regulation of trade and navigation, shall have no operation in Ireland without the consent of your own legisla-



ture ; so that you will always have it in your power to reject the law, and return to the situation you at present stand in. I am much obliged to you, *Master Bull*, answers *Paddy*, but that, in my opinion, does not obviate the difficulty. It is only saying, lend me your constitution, and if you do not approve the use I make of it, you may take it again—Very well, replies the Englishman, what is there unreasonable in that, *Paddy*?—Do you want me to take you into partnership without having any security for your performance of the covenants? Do you want me to consent that all laws respecting commerce shall originate in *Ireland*? Or do you desire me to grant my home market to you, and expect me to follow such laws as you shall prescribe? Laws must take their rise in one of the kingdoms for the regulation of commerce; and pray, *Mr. Paddy*, is it unreasonable for me to say that such laws ought to originate in *England*? I have observed you are very desirous of having it understood that Ireland enjoyed a free trade, and a free constitution, previous to the 15th Charles II. and that I deprived you of both until the year 1779, and 1782, when you emancipated yourself, and obliged me to restore what was justly your own. Now, *Paddy*, let me set you right in these particulars.

A free

A free constitution was, and is your just and lawful inheritance. As a British subject, it is your birthright; and I look back with proper indignation on the policy of those times that put it in circumscription. A free trade also, I think you ought to have possessed at all times; a perfect liberty to trade with every quarter of the globe, (the British colonies excepted, and the settlements in India, belonging to the united company of British merchants trading to those parts). It is of no consequence to state the period when you first enjoyed the liberty of trading directly to the British colonies, and supplying England with the produce. You *never* could have enjoyed that trade *but as a boon*, a free gift, revocable at pleasure. Your colony trade granted in 1779, stands exactly in the same predicament, and your wise men talk very foolishly, when they say it was closed in *good faith* at that æra, and cannot be claimed or opened again without a violation of national honor.

However I thought we were now to meet as two friends, more enlightened than our ancestors, and of course less liable to prejudices of a religious or political tendency. On my part, I am willing to accept of you as a partner, provided you consent to carry on trade as I do. My present establishment cost me a very considerable sum of money,

money, and to preserve it will cost me still more. I desire nothing of you in the maintenance of our trade, save a very small portion of the profits, coming to you as a joint partner, and surely that cannot reasonably be refused. It appears evident to my understanding, that we shall be useful to each other; and when your wise men insinuate that I have some mental reservation, some secret intention to injure you, not at present obvious to a common understanding, they manifest a disposition ruinous to you and injurious to me. My plain meaning is—You shall enjoy the benefits of my trade on precisely the same terms I enjoy it myself; and when you choose to dissolve the partnership, such a liberty shall be established in our agreement as will put that matter out of the reach of all doubt or controversy whatsoever.

The servants of the Crown firmly contended, that such a conversation between the Englishman and Irishman, would convey the genuine spirit and tendency of the proposed system. But, say the gentlemen in opposition, Ireland, by submitting to follow England in her commercial regulations, notwithstanding a negative is fully established in the Irish Parliament, surrenders the free constitution closed in 1782, and they say this with as much gravity, as if they really did not recollect,  
that



that ever since the year 1779, session after session, the Irish Parliament have recorded a similar violation of the constitution, without expressing a single apprehension of its striking at their independence. The *principle* stands fully and unequivocally established in the statute book from 1779 to 1785. The Irish have imported, during the space of six years, the produce of the British colonies and plantations, upon terms of enacting from time to time, by their laws, such taxes as the Parliament of England imposed on British subjects. The agreement of 1779, has been constantly recited in the Irish money bills. The tax recited and the tax enacted. But then, say the gentlemen in opposition, this mode of argument is fallacious. The act of 1779 gave the Irish a power of selection; it was in fact, say they, a declaration of rights; and to accomplish so important a settlement, the Irish agreed to adopt and pass, by reference, certain English acts, respecting trade and navigation *then* in existence. But such an act cannot justly be compared to one that covenants to adopt English acts in *future*.

On this ground, said the King's servants, gentlemen in opposition think they stand secure. But mark the absurdity of the whole. In their opinion, it does not trench on the legislative freedom

of

of Ireland, to adopt British laws in any particular branch of commerce; but when a more enlarged system is in contemplation, an adoption of British laws would subvert the constitutional rights of the Irish legislature, as if the greater or less extent could change its constitutional or unconstitutional nature. Motives, arising from prudence or policy, might be urged as reasons for accepting one trade and rejecting the other; but in fair argument they can have no reference to the *principle* in question. That stands confessed on the Irish statutes since the year 1779; and how a precarious grant of the colony trade at that æra, could be received by the people of Ireland as a splendid instance of British liberality, and an extended and irrevocable grant of the same trade in 1785, considered an insult, men of common understandings cannot easily imagine. The fact is, they obtained the colony trade in 1779, on conditions. The Irish have since that time complied with the terms of the agreement, and they retain the trade; but still it is revocable, either by their refusing to follow the British acts, or at the pleasure of the British legislature. Now the proposed system of commercial adjustment makes the colonial trade perpetual on the part of England, but revocable at pleasure on the part of Ireland. They encounter no difficulty to effect  
this

this at any time; they have only to reject the British law, and there ends the agreement. This power therefore of rejecting the law, establishes the independency of the Irish Parliament, and according to the very doctrine of opposition, England abridges the constitutional privileges of her legislature, by making the grant on her part *perpetual*.

A liberty to trade with all the world, continued the King's servants, is a blessing, when a country is in possession of the means; but when the people of Ireland consider that a trade to the British colonies, and a free access to the home market of England, would in *ten years* enrich their country, in a greater degree than a trade with every other quarter of the globe could possibly do in a century, the choice will not be difficult to make. To establish this doctrine (which gentlemen in opposition might say is merely hypothetical), it is only necessary to state the trade at present subsisting between the two countries. What additional advantages the proposed arrangement gives to Ireland, and what channels of trade are open to her, independent of England? Here, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Foster, displayed such an extensive and accurate knowledge in the trade of both nations, that opposition lost much ground.

F

He



He stated, that Great Britain imported annually from Ireland to the amount of £. 2,500,000 of her products, mostly duty free, and in the proposed system, covenants never to lay a duty on them. Ireland imports not quite £. 1,000,000 from Britain, raises a revenue on every article, and reserves a power of continuing that revenue. Britain also exports salt, hops, coals, tin and bark, without receiving any duty, and covenants not to impose any in future. On the contrary, Ireland charges a duty on every article sent to Britain.

Let us now see how the staple commodity of Ireland would be affected, in case the late popular clamour, for a war of duties, had forced the Irish Parliament into an adoption of the measure. In the first place, it is necessary to state one fact, not generally known, that four fifths of the linens manufactured in Ireland, are supported in their several stages as they approach maturity by British capital. This single truth shows how immediately the staple of *Ireland* is in the power of *England*.

Britain however takes annually of Irish linens, to the amount of FIFTEEN HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS, and to prevent a possible rivalship in her market, lays a duty of 30 per cent. upon all foreign linens imported into England, notwithstanding which, such is the excellence of the linen manufactures

factures in Holland, Germany, and Russia, they force a very considerable sale in England ; a plain proof, that England could be supplied with this necessary article, at a saving to the people of 450,000*l.* and which she now voluntarily bestows on the sister nation.

After stating these facts, it becomes necessary to enquire what channels, distinct from England, are open for the Irish, in case their linens were excluded the British market, by taking off the 30 per cent. on the importation of foreign linens into England, or by making the Irish linens an object of British revenue ? Will Portugal, Spain, or France take them ? It is very well known they will not, as the Irish linens want cheapness to force a market in these countries.—Will Russia, Germany, or Holland take them ? They certainly will not, as they are rivals in the same manufacture, and able to undersell the Irish. Where then will Ireland find a market for her staple, if England shuts her ports ? The British West Indies, the French, Spanish, and Portuguese ports, have been shut long since in that quarter ; so that in fact, the only market left for Irish linens in case of a rupture with Britain, is the bankrupt States of America, a continent where it is certain, the Irish might dispose of the whole produce of their island in a week,

and without the *trouble* of carrying back a *single shilling* in return.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, after having fully explained how directly this important branch of Irish manufacture stands in the power of Britain, and that by the proposed adjustment, Irish linens were to be imported into England, free of all duty, and this great benefit secured to the Irish nation for ever, entered minutely into the whole of the trade carried on at present between the two countries, and very clearly demonstrated, that without the assistance of England, Ireland so far from being able to carry on a general trade, would not be able to carry on trade at all. England, said this truly great man, stretched along side the sister nation, affords a capacious and steady market; the returns are quick and certain;—to establish that market is one great object of the proposed arrangement; and when commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade takes its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make the fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies, or legislative interference, from its natural and beneficial course.

Such



Such were the sentiments of this accomplished statesman, and his coadjutors on the late subject of a commercial arrangement with the sister nation. But all their endeavours were in vain.—The people of Ireland could not be persuaded, but an adoption of the proposed system would amount to a surrender of their legislative independency, and that it was an open barter of constitution for commerce. On the question being put, a majority of nineteen only appeared for the introduction of the bill, which on the side of opposition was considered a victory. It was therefore determined on the part of Government, not to proceed further in the business until the bill was called for by the people of Ireland, which was ordered to be printed and distributed throughout the kingdom, that its principles and tendency might be perfectly understood.

In this state rests at present that very important negotiation. The bill may be called for, or it may sleep for ever. It is however generally understood, that another system, for the purpose of adjusting all commercial differences between the kingdoms, will be brought forward, either in the English or Irish Parliament, in the course of the ensuing session. At this time, therefore, your sentiments on a subject of so much consequence to both countries,

countries, will be doubly valuable, and I live in expectation they will not be refused.

I shall now venture to state a few matters for your consideration, that, during the course of this business, have forced themselves upon my mind, as objects of importance. To get at the home market of England, you must perceive, was the great object of every gentleman that supported the late commercial system in the Irish Parliament. They knew very well that trade of every description must soon flourish in Ireland, could the people of England be tempted to grant a full participation of the benefits arising to them from the navigation laws. British manufacturers, and with them, a British capital to a very large amount would, in that case, very shortly settle on the other side.— From her western situation, Ireland would soon become the mart in Europe for the trade to America; and as the tobacco trade in particular must inevitably settle in Ireland, she would supply England, through her medium, with that necessary and valuable article of commerce. Her ships could be freighted and victualed cheaper than in Britain; and as there are but few taxes in Ireland, trade in general could be carried on to much greater advantage. The common people, accustomed to idleness and every species of dissipation, would  
be

be soon employed in the various branches of manufacture, and a race of Irish yeomanry be established, competent to the great and essential employment of agriculture. These, and a variety of other advantages that would arise out of the system, (notwithstanding the fourth proposition was *ungraciously* worded) were fully known to the servants of the Crown in Ireland. But their several employments placed those gentlemen in a very awkward predicament during the whole of the negotiation, and rendered their endeavours ineffectual. They were labouring to make a good commercial bargain for their country, notwithstanding they held offices immediately in the disposal of the Sovereign, and had absolutely outwitted his Minister, by getting him pledged to the original system, which, if carried into law, would in the opinion of the first men in this country, have laid the commerce of England at the feet of Ireland. On the other side the water they were objects of general suspicion, *because they were servants of the Crown*, and it was impossible for them to explain all the good consequences that would arise to Ireland from the arrangement then under consideration, as every argument they used in support of it, would be urged on this side of so many reasons for not acceding to it; and at the same time subject the King's  
servants



servants in Ireland to the *fashionable reproach* of playing a *double game* with their master. In truth, Sir, the people on the other side did not see their way through this business, or they would have cordially embraced the twenty propositions, notwithstanding some of the resolves of the English Parliament were exceptionable; not in their spirit or tendency, but in their style, which might be justly considered as approaching rather to the language of a dictator than a friend, meeting on terms of equality and mutual benefit. Mr. Foster laboured this point for his country with uncommon zeal and ability; but they either could not, or would not understand him.\*

The temper and disposition of the people of Ireland manifested, in a variety of instances, during the last six years, did not exhibit a very cordial attachment to their brethren on this side the channel; and some late outrages committed by the populace of Dublin, gave rise to an opinion, that nothing but a union with Ireland, could establish

\* The foulest stain on the character of the Irish, is their attack on the life of this gentleman. When the clamour for Protecting Duties prevailed in Dublin, a gang of ruffians absolutely attempted to assassinate him. For the credit of the Irish nation, I most sincerely wish, *this note* may be the only record of that infernal transaction.

that

that country as a useful member of the British Empire. Indeed some people (and of considerable authority) have gone so far as to say that such a measure is at present lurking in the British Cabinet. I hope it may be otherwise. It is not possible for the human mind to contrive a measure so completely destructive of Britain's most valuable inheritance. The prejudices of the people of Ireland are so strong, so firmly rooted against an Irish delegation in an English Parliament, that I am perfectly convinced, in six weeks after the proposal was made to them, (even if the compensation offered was the entire commerce of this country) that every quarter of the island would be in arms. An attempt to reason the people into such a measure, would be just as effectual as the playing of a water-engine on an eruption of Vesuvius. A civil war in Ireland, (the certain issue of a proposition, tending to a union on *any* conditions) would be accompanied with consequences much more dreadful than people on this side generally imagine. There are not in that kingdom more than five hundred thousand Protestant inhabitants; the Roman Catholics amount to rather more than two millions; the Dissenters about three hundred thousand. Now, although Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Dissenter, would to a man take the field, on a proposal from

England to incorporate their Parliament with ours, yet their views would be very different. An abandonment of the measure, on the part of England, might induce our Protestant fellow-subject in Ireland to lay down his firelock, but it would have no such effect either on the Roman Catholic or Dissenter. The former would consider it as the æra of his emancipation from a Protestant yoke; and the latter would endeavour to grasp the moment, as propitious to his views, of a government for Ireland. Set once in motion, let the cause be what it may, such would be the objects of the greater part of the people, and to effect them, our Protestant brethren must suffer every misery the mind of man is capable of conceiving. That there are many of the Roman Catholic gentlemen in Ireland perfectly satisfied with the British government, and as loyal subjects as any throughout his Majesty's dominions, I entertain not the least doubt, but in a civil war their voices would not be heard. The common people of that persuasion, in the country parts of Ireland, are at this hour as entirely destitute of information, and entertain religious prejudices as strongly as they did in the year 1641, when the English of the Pale, as they were then called, suffered in multitudes by the hands of slaughtering fanatics, and were even denied the Christian offices



ces of sepulture. Every man, not totally lost to the feelings of humanity, must stand aghast on the bare perusal of that bloody page of history; and must contemplate with horror, any system that has the most remote tendency to renew those days of murder and devastation. That such will be the consequences if the British Minister, from an opinion that a Union with Ireland is attainable, agitates the measure in Parliament, I entertain not the smallest doubt; it is the opinion of thousands in the sister kingdom, and therefore I advance it, as a subject highly deserving your most serious consideration.

That a commercial arrangement is necessary to unite the two kingdoms, most people allow, and I think one may be finally adjusted without trenching on the legislative freedom of Ireland, or committing any violence on the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain. In the progress of this desirable business, nothing should be kept a secret from the people of both countries. Every thing ought to be open and ingenuous. Plain dealing operates as favourably on the minds of the people of Ireland, as on the open, liberal, and candid natures of their brethren on this side the channel. If the Minister finds any essential difficulty in adjusting a permanent settlement of commercial in-

tercourse with Ireland, it must be chiefly of his own creating. The people on the other side are disposed to treat for such an adjustment, and treated properly, will meet him half way.

It has been truly observed, and by that sound politician, Mr. Charles Sheridan, Secretary at War in Ireland, that "the relative situation of the two kingdoms is without a single exception totally new, an *imperium in imperio*; two states equally free, each equally independent of the other, but both governed by one common sovereign, forming coequal branches of the common empire. This is a situation, (says the elegant writer,) concerning which history is silent, and experience useless." In this state of imperial dignity and independence, Ireland stretches forth the hand of friendship. On principles of *equality* she will treat; she owns no superior.

I shall now, Sir, request your particular attention to a matter so decisively injurious, in my opinion, to all the blooming hopes of the sister nation, that I cannot avoid treating it with more than ordinary circumspection. The subject I allude to is,

THE  
P R E S E N T S T A T E  
OF THE  
P R E S S I N I R E L A N D.

I have observed in a former part of this letter, that a probable influx of British capital, and British manufacturers, were the chief reasons urged on the other side, to induce the Irish Parliament to close with the adjustment offered by the English legislature; and it cannot be denied, but that these reasons were founded on great probability and good sense. The Irish certainly want money, but in wanting that, they want every thing. Their free constitution, and their free trade, may in the course of some centuries give them riches, but what they are to do in the *mean time* is a question that very well deserves the consideration of their legislature. England is certainly the only country that can supply their necessities, and make them opulent in a few years. Yet, such is the very extraordinary conduct of the people at present in the management of the Irish press, that an indifferent person might very reasonably suppose they were labouring to deter the people of England, or  
any



any other people from visiting their country, or lending a shilling on an Irish security. A day seldom passes without having the public mind alarmed by the publication of enormities (supposed to be perpetrated in the country parts of Ireland) that would disgrace the savages of New Zealand. If an idle mob follow a Mr. O'Connor, and assist his fooleries in any particular spot, the whole is swelled into a dangerous insurrection by the Irish publications, and the country described in a situation little short of open rebellion. If such a madman as Fitzgerald commits a murder in any part of the kingdom, the newspapers are sure to make the story worse than it really is, and to keep it floating for a considerable time. If the White Boys, the Right Boys, or any other boys oppose a tythe proctor in his *merciful* collection of a sacerdotal revenue, arising from a *poor potatoe garden*, some person *that can write* in the district where this *dreadful opposition* happened, and who cannot withstand the glorious impulse of seeing his works in print, is sure to dispatch a most *horrible description* of the *bloody business* to a Dublin printer, and who, in his turn, secures the future favours of his correspondent by giving his narrative a conspicuous insertion. All these extravagancies are copied into the London publications, and through them, the intel-

intelligence not only reaches the interior parts of England, but is communicated to every enlightened nation on the face of the globe. The consequences are, foreigners will neither visit or lend a shilling in Ireland, as the civil jurisprudence of that country must, *by their own accounts*, stand as a dead letter, and of course, the life, liberty, and property of the subject, be in a state of perpetual danger. At this moment, such is the opinion of the people of England, respecting Irish security, that you would almost find as much difficulty in procuring a purchaser on this side for an estate situated in any part of Ireland, as for one skirting the banks of the Ohio. And yet an Irishman, who had never been in England, might with more propriety object to purchasing an estate in London, because Lord George Gordon's mob had nearly spread a general conflagration throughout the British metropolis a few years ago. A much more serious mischief might have been expected from that transaction, than from any thing that has happened in Ireland since the revolution. If the present secretary, Mr. Orde, could be suspected of so deep a policy, I should be led to imagine that he adopted this mode of preventing the manufacturers of England from migrating, or vesting a shilling of their property in Ireland. A  
more

more effectual way it is certain could not be devised, and if the printers continue these narratives but a very few years longer, the kingdom will unquestionably be thrown back half a century at least.

To suppose the Irish printers have any intention to impede the growing prosperity of their country, by inserting such extravagant relations, would not only be unjust, but extremely ridiculous. There are many of them very deservedly esteemed by the public, and are men of considerable property. The fact is, their country correspondents are fond of writing *marvellous* stories, and they are published without consideration. On the present occasion, I am induced to relate an anecdote that lately occurred under my own observation, and which shews pretty clearly, that Irish newspapers have already done that country a serious mischief.

A few days ago I waited on a gentleman in the city, of great eminence in the commercial world, for the purpose of knowing where I might address a letter to a certain correspondent of his, whose residence I knew was in some part of Holland. In the course of our conversation he mentioned, that for some time past he was employed by several of his wealthy correspondents at Amsterdam, to purchase



chase stock in London for their use, and to a very considerable amount. He added, that many Dutch families had lately vested a great part of their property in the English funds, not being satisfied with the present posture of affairs at home. This information induced me to observe, that I thought money might be laid out to much greater advantage in Ireland; and that as the Dutch were not only a commercial, but an enterprizing people, and knew very well how many superior blessings Ireland enjoys, both in its soil and situation, it was difficult to account for their not looking to that kingdom, as a spot for profitable speculation.—The astonishment he expressed on this occasion is hardly to be described. *Speculation in Ireland, said he!—Vest a man's property in Ireland!*—Good God, Sir, what could induce you to think of any matter so distant from common prudence?—Why surely, Sir, continued he, very gravely, there is no such thing as law in Ireland. The Sheriffs, I understand, cannot give a legal possession of the most insignificant tenement without the assistance of a military force. Indeed, throughout the whole country, law has no operation. There's the White Boys in one part, the Right Boys in another part, and I verily believe the devil's boys in every part. O Lord, Sir! said he, had I a *guinea* in Ireland,

H

I would

I would think it well sold at *sixpence*. On my assuring him that his opinion respecting Ireland was founded in error, he immediately put the Morning Herald into my hand, which contained various extracts from the Dublin papers, reciting the most dreadful barbarities, supposed to be perpetrated in several parts of Ireland, and by such a number of the inhabitants, that a stranger must really imagine a more uncivilized race of people could not be found in the deserts of Ethiopia. Read those advices, Sir, said he, and then I hope you will not doubt WHAT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES TELL YOU.

Notwithstanding the evils I now complain of, are of a very serious and alarming tendency, yet still they are not without a remedy. The establishment of an independent press in Dublin, with a corresponding one in London, would, in a very short time, be productive of the best consequences to Ireland. When I mention an independent press, I mean one not in the least connected with Ministers, or any description of people in opposition. The chief objects of such an institution, would be to report faithfully and circumstantially, the various occurrences of the times, and to publish the debates in the Parliament of that kingdom, with every possible accuracy, and with the most scrupulous

pulous attention to impartiality. Such people as have read the debates of the Irish Parliament, reported in their Newspapers, for some time past, will soon perceive how very essential it is to have this department of the press immediately regulated. The political conduct and opinions of every able and active member of the Irish legislature, are become matters of very serious import to the people of both countries; and therefore to avoid all possibility of complaint, either from the gentlemen in Parliament of having their speeches mutilated or misrepresented, or from the people, of not being able to obtain an accurate knowledge of what passes in the senate, a shorthand-writer of acknowledged ability ought to be sent over every session. Such a measure, when the liberal tendency of it was properly explained would be applauded by the people of Ireland, and highly encouraged by their legislature. The Members of our Parliament would then be truly informed of what passes in the Senate of the sister nation, and not confined to the narrow information obtained by private letters, or imperfect or partial sketches in the Irish publications, would in debate be enabled to speak of the legislative proceedings of that country without the hazard of a contradiction.—  
Indeed every department of government would be



equally benefited, and errors arising from misrepresentation avoided. A press in Ireland, established on these principles, would soon become the Gazette of that country; and every man would naturally look to it for authentic information. If any matter occurred, that really endangered the peace of the kingdom, it would be faithfully reported; and indeed, every occurrence that deserved public attention, given without diminution or exaggeration. The people of England, and the inhabitants of every other polished nation, having then a fair opportunity of contemplating the wisdom and importance of the Irish legislature, would no longer be deterred from visiting the island, and embarking in all the various branches of commerce and manufacture that have enriched the most *barren* nations of the world. The advantages that must accrue to Ireland from such an institution, are so apparent and so numerous, I cannot avoid expressing my astonishment that gentlemen who have estates in that country, and who must, of course, obtain an increase of revenue by an influx of foreign capital, have never once thought of encouraging the most certain means of obtaining it.— And this amazement is still encreased, when I consider, that an independent press, in the sister nation, and a corresponding one in this, might be establish-

established at an expence so trifling, that it hardly deserves the consideration of a moment. Indeed the most solid advantages to Ireland might be accomplished, by an immediate adoption of this measure, without the eventual loss of a single shilling, as a well conducted press in these kingdoms, must do more than pay its expences, or private individuals would not be so diligent in establishing them.

I shall not attempt to arrest your attention to this measure upon the ground of any possible benefit that might arise from it to your property in Ireland, because I am satisfied, a fair appeal to your natural benevolence would have more weight. I am not to learn, that to do good is ever the *first* object of your consideration, and that the *second* is a studious endeavour to conceal it.

I am, dear Sir,

Your ever faithful, and

Devoted Servant,

London, Nov. 28,

1786.

I. J.

F I N I S.

...at an expense to him, that it is  
...the completion of his  
...the fact that it is not  
...by an independent action of his  
...without the aid of a third  
...as a well-considered piece in the kingdom  
...do more than pay the expenses of his  
...individuals would not be to him in the  
...them.

I shall not attempt to make your question  
...the point of the ground of my possible  
...that might arise from it to your property in  
...land, because I am not a free agent in  
...your natural liberty would be more weighty  
...I am not to leave, that is, I am not to  
...of your condition, and that the law is  
...a student of law is content in

6 DE 58

I am, dear Sir,

Yours ever faithfully, and

Dr. John G. S. S.

London, Nov. 22

1788

H I M I S